



Progress Report:

Resolving human conflicts, participation of local people in conservation, and raising people awareness about threatened species in Parvar protected area

We have done our commitment due to activities and methodology which was written in application form. Activities are explained in details in the following:

- 1- Holding sessions in public places in the villages of the area (mosques, office of the villages council, game guard station and etc.) and introduce the project to the people and describe the necessity of implementing the project for conservation of the area. Conducting sessions or workshops with local community to raise their environmental knowledge esp.**

Several sessions have been held with the stakeholders during the project. These meetings included topics such as governmental sections (DOE), local people (villagers, ranchers and Orchard men) and poachers.

- Sessions with Department of Environment (DOE) :**

Several sessions have been held in the Department of Environment of Semnan in order to draw attention to the participatory conservation of Parvar protected area. We are planning to implement a participatory conservation management in Parvar protected area in the near future, and we held meetings in the Department of Environment of Tehran with representatives of different sections. Due to the growth of unsystematic tourism, We are planning to organize tourism and Eco-tourism in order to prevent the adverse effect of unorganized tourism in protected area. Therefore, We are planning to adjusting a MOU between us and DOE for participatory management in the area. We have initiate a committee consist of Semnan governmental sectors, which are engaged in Parvar protected area for



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serving or development of matters such as water, energy, electricity, roads, tourism, safety and hygiene in DOE.

The first and the important outcome of this committee was that each serious decision should be check and control by the general agreement of this committee. Regarding our strong bonds with the local people and with parcipatory conservation methods, we can be successful in organizing Eco-tourism in the area.



Committee consist of governmnetal sections-November 2016



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*Session with Department of Environment of Semnan-
May 2016*

- **Session with The Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization of Iran**

We participated in a session with Dr. Ahmadi pour (the vice president and the administrator of The cultural heritage and tourism Organization), the general governor of Semnan, administrator of Cultural heritage and tourism of Semnan and the representative of the local community in the field of Eco-Tourism in Semnan. There were 300 attendees in this session and 2 groups had a chance to present their planned projects. We had the opportunity to talk about the project. There were representatives from the Parvar region and the project was well received among the attendees. After the meeting and sharing our research and findings, we were asked to assist with moving tourism towards a more sustainable development. This was an encouraging meeting for the local community of Parvar, as they realized that their activities have not gone unnoticed. This session had a



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positive effect for us in our future project in organizing some of the village's houses as Eco Lodge and getting the necessary licensure. At the end of the session, Dr. Ahmadi pour and the general governor appreciated our efforts in the project and its achievements. Due to our upcoming activities in the Parvar protected area, it seems that this project could be a pilot for the other regions in field of nature conservation.



*Session with The Cultural heritage and Tourism Organization of Iran-
January 2017*



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- **Sessions with villagers, ranchers and orchard men:**

We have tried to cover almost every village in the area and have held several meetings with local people. During these sessions, conflict with wildlife and existing obstacles with DOE were discussed. We have also identified those individuals who can cooperate with the project in order to hold facilitation meetings for solving conflict and problems.

We are in direct connection with Kooli ,Tom,Kaverd,Sheli,Finesk and Parvar, main villages of the area. Sessions have been held in village's mosque and we are currently networking with the villages' councils.



Visiting Orchards with some of the orchard men-Jun 2016

Environmental issues such as waste, water consumption and using pesticide for agriculture were covered during these sessions. In case of village's waste, we are working on raising awareness about waste sorting. Currently, wastes are collected close to rivers because in some villages like Koolim, river is passing by the village. We have talked to several orchard men and ranchers who had conflict with brown bear and Persian leopard and have explained the importance of these species and their biological values. In these sessions we described the importance of their region by emphasizing the concept of Parvar as an Ecotone which is very rare in the world because of its climate and biodiversity. We also mentioned the role of wildlife in saving the nature and their effect on saving the remained parts of Parvar forests and plants (eg. brown bear). We discussed natural pruning of the wild goats and wild sheep, and also carnivores roles in the chain of life. We are managing these issues with participation of local people. In part 2, the activities are fully explained.

- **Holding several sessions with poachers**

In main villages of the area we were managed for special sessions with poachers. We were discussing about their problems and difficulties and the reasons of their motivation toward illegal hunting. We also were explaining about the importance of carnivores species and their conservation values and ask their participation to not hunting vulnerable species. We have tried to reduce this conflict in the region.

One of the advantages of holding these sessions was participation of a poacher who used to hunt more than 50 Brown bears, and now is willing to cooperate with the project. We had invited some Eco tourists from Germany, who were interested in observing brown bear. We held sessions with poachers and the German tourists in order to explain the importance of saving these species as they are extinct in some countries like Germany and people are willing to travel far to observe these creatures. We believe that this could be helpful for local people and poachers to understand the importance of conservation.



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Moreover, we are providing a list of poachers in the area and cooperating with some, in order to find new acceptable spots to camera trap.



Session in Koolim village's mosque with ranchers and poachers-May 2016

2-Resolving some of the human conflicts like Brown Bear and orchard or Lutra Lutra on fishponds, Leopard and livestock sustainably (conflicts of the area have been identified during the last year by project team) by different and appropriate mechanisms like fencing off, electric fencing, raising wall heights, employment of night watchman for orchards in problematic seasons and etc.

- **Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*)**

In two main villages of the area, Koolim and Tom we have managed for electric fencing in orchards.

The Parvar village has less inhabitants and we have installed the electric fence in one of the orchards in this area. During this process we have noticed a significant point, Villagers are not willing to follow a new methods such as electric fencing as a solution. They prefer to get compensation cost ,as Semnan Department of Environment 's word about paying damages cost but haven't done that since then. Although they receive anything, they still have hope. We have started Negotiating with several orchard men to convince them for using this method to solving conflict problems. We are trying to cross this message that they should try to solving the conflict problems by their own hands, instead of waiting for DOE or other governmental authorities or for the insurance to pay them. It seems that DOE have started a wrong way for solving the conflict problem in this area because it's encouraging people to increase the conflicts to gain more money from the government. We also have discussed about the importance of forestry fruits such as hawthorn(*Crataegus*), Barberry(*Berberis*) ,Oak (*Quercus*) and Plum(*Prunus domestica*) as main food for Brown bear. We have asked them to reducing picking of these kind of fruits, especially in spring, summer and autumn when they are in pressure to raising their cubs. in order to preventing entrance of Brown bear and Wild boar into the orchards. local people have the same problems with Wild boar which we are trying to solve as well. We were more successful with Brown bear issue as it's more Charismatic specie than Wild boar. We also forced them to repair their fences and walls which their holes are easy ways for wild boars and brown bears to entering the orchard. We installed two camera traps at the orchards to realize how in action brown bears and wild boars attacks to the garden and the fields ,and show people the captured footages of the animals and ask their suggestions also to solve the conflicts by increasing the enhancement or using electric fences for the future.



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*Using Electric Fence in one of the orchard in Parvar
Village-July 2016*

- **Persian Leopard (*Panthera pardus saxicolor*)**

We have focused on raising awareness about the ecological value of Persian leopard as it's one of the main tourist attraction in the area. There were 3 conflict issues with Persian Leopard, which have been reported this year. We have installed camera traps where the leopard's attack had occurred. We also have talked to those ranchers who had lost their livestock. Some effective causes in increasing conflict like leaving livestock without any protection in a safe zone in the protected area, which is illegal, and also the other factors like the Leopard's age, have mentioned. We have installed camera traps twice. One on the remains of a domestic cow in Finesk village. The cow belonged to Mr. Mohammadi, one of the ranchers in the area. We failed to capture any photos from the invading Leopard. The second case was a Leopard attacking a domestic goat, which belonged to Mr. Baharolaah. The attack occurred in the forest near the Finesk village. Analyzing camera trap photos led us to an old Leopard. We warned the local people to consider the issue in grazing and transportation of livestock, and



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be more watchful for the leopard attack. They were also warned about entering the safe zone. We also convinced the local people that attacking the livestock is not a common behavior in Leopard, except for the old or an injured animal. So poisoning or putting traps in the forest for killing the carnivores are not necessary. These issues were a chance for us to speak our message and prove that the decreasing number of Herbivores can be problematic. Declining numbers of Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*), Wild goat (*Capra aegagrus*), Wild sheep (*Ovis aries*) and Roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), as the main food source for large carnivores like Persian Leopard, can lead the animals to villages. Therefore, the conflict rate would be soared. Regarding the public's attention valuable species, we were successful in shining a light on Persian leopard.



Visiting Mr.Mohammadi one of the ranchers who have lost his cow in Finesk Village-July 2016

- **European Otter (Lutra Lutra) :**

There was 1 reported conflict problem with Lutra Lutra and fishpond in Tom village. We have talked to owner and have visited the place. We could installed a camera trap in a place where the owner believed was the entrance of the animal into the fishpond. During the process we could be able to make a reliable connecting with the owner in order to not kill the invader Otter. Finally we found the path which otter use to come to the pond and increase the fence there and solving the conflict.

2- Designing and installing different and engaging caution road signs at a proper place on the main road of the area to prevent wildlife auto accidents

The standard caution road sign for Persian leopard have designed and prepared. All arrangement for installing two road signs have done so far. The road signs will be



Road Sign- August 2016



installed in the main road of Parvar protected area, where 2 points were recognized as Leopard's corridor on the road. We could recognize The 2 spots after several camera trapping in that valley and direct observing of Persian leopard in the main road.

- 3- Face to face education to the visitors about the values and threats of the area and suggest some instructions that every one should collaborate and obey for conservation of the area with delivering information cards, and wildlife postal cards with descriptions on them by our educator team, in stations and distributing biodegradable plastic bags to them in weekends two months of summer (esp. wildlife).**

Designing and printing educational brochures about main mammals species of the area for raising awareness of Eco tourists and travelers who are coming to the area in proper seasons, have done. The brochures are consisting information about the value of these species and providing simple solutions toward participatory conservation. The project's team members were managed special canopy along side of the main road of Parvar protected area and the brochures were fully explained to people by team members and volunteers. These actions could be effective in reducing conflicts as well. Biodegradable plastic bags were provided and distributed among visitors and tourists. 4 volunteers from Koolim village have joined us, as we asked them to cooperate in the educational purpose.



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We also could convince the owner of Behesht e Parvar, the local restaurant in the area, to hanging our educational posters in restaurant's wall for visitors.



Face to face education to the visitors-May 2016



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Face to face education to the visitors- August 2016



Face to face education to the visitors- Jun 2016



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4- Participatory conservation of Red Deer (Call mating)

Red Deer call mating conservation with cooperation of Semnan department of environment was held during Red deer call mating season from mid September till end of November 2016 in Parvar Protected area. In this project 16 volunteers joined game guards to protect red deer during this vulnerable season. Educating volunteers and attracting participation in conservation, were the most valuable achievements in this project. We have received amount of money from volunteers who were contributed in this project. We have spend it for paying salaries to poachers who were guiding volunteers to tents.



Volunteers attending educational workshop for Call mating participatory conservation- September 2016



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Volunteers-October 2016



Call mating Tent- September- October 2016
